

Judiciary Committee

March 14, 2012

Testimony in Favor of
SB 280 AA Revising the Penalty for Capital Felonies

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT. I appear before this committee today as a private citizen.

I served on the national staff of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. for 17 years. While I worked mostly on employment discrimination litigation, I had numerous opportunities to observe the work of staff attorneys working on death penalty cases, and I was appalled at what I saw.

It is my strong belief that the death penalty across the country has been inflicted most often on black defendants, especially where the victim was white. It is not applied uniformly by race. In Connecticut, evidence shows that there is also a geographical disparity by judicial district.

It is my strong belief that the extended appeals process is necessary to ensure that a death sentence is properly and justly applied, insofar as that is possible. Given the absolute nature of the sentence, this process cannot be shortened without risking the taking of an innocent life.

It is my strong belief that the extended appeals process deprives a victim's family of closure and finality, which would happen much sooner with a sentence of life without release.

In the case of the horrendous Cheshire home invasion murders, the tragedy of the crime was revisited time and time again as the two defendants fought the death penalty. It will go on for years to come as appeals are processed.

It is my strong belief that the costs to the state of imposing a death sentence far exceed the costs of lifetime incarceration.

It is my strong belief that the judicial system cannot be made flawless, as it depends on people serving as judges, prosecutors, and juries. Since 1973, at least 138 people have been released from death rows throughout the country.

It is my strong belief that the death penalty is not a deterrent. Statistics from states with and without the death penalty confirm this.

It is my strong belief that imposition of a death sentence is in direct correlation with the poverty of the defendant.

It is my strong belief that the individual states of the United States which still impose a death sentence stand alone with only a few counties of the world. In 2008, 93% of all known executions took place in only five countries - China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the USA.

Therefore, given these reasons, I do not want the state of Connecticut executing people in my name. I want the death penalty abolished, to be replaced with life without release.